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ON PAGE 10CHICAGO TRIBUNE  
19 March 1986

# Cutting the Soviet UN staff

The Soviet Union has threatened "direct damage" to Soviet-American relations—scuttling even the planned superpower summit—if the United States compels Moscow to cut its bloated staff at the United Nations.

Kremlin officials have condemned the American order to reduce the Soviet UN staff from 275 to 170 and have ordered their New York staffers to line up international opposition.

But Washington is well within its rights to demand a reduction, and the Soviets are foolish to even hint that they would tie the issue to the summit.

The reason the U.S. acted was to reduce the press of Soviet espionage to reasonable proportions. The Soviet mission contains an unreasonably high number of employees; its strength is greater than the combined payroll

of both the United States and mainland Chinese missions. And a lot of them function as spies.

Everyone knows that and accepts it, but the Soviets have shown no self-restraint in the matter and it is a lot cheaper to run an intelligence agent than it is to follow one.

Moscow has said the U.S. action raised the question "whether it is appropriate for UN headquarters to be situated in a country that does not fulfill its obligations to the organization."

If the Soviets really feel that way, here's a suggestion that no doubt will make Mr. Gorbachev and his KGB chiefs cringe: Move the headquarters of the world political body to Moscow. That way American spies will have a convenient place to roost.